

PRESIDENT : Order, order. It is the deliberate policy of the State not to have one inch more of Railway within the State and I have already stated it before. The construction of a railway from Quilon to Ernakulam, with all the bridges, culverts and the difference of the levels would cost so much and the meter-gauge railway is confessedly so inefficient and so badly managed and so thoroughly unsuitable for traffic, heavy or light, that any extension of the South Indian Railway line from Quilon to Ernakulam will not be contemplated. The only way of dealing with the matter is by a broad gauge line right through the continent of India, a matter which is now under discussion so that a break of gauge may be avoided. That is a matter which will involve about Rs. 70 to 80 crores so far as India is concerned. The matter is under discussion by the Government of India as part of the Post-War Reconstruction Plan. So far as this Government and the State are concerned we hope to get on to the end of time without a railway, for the reasons that I have already stated, and this State will be only too glad if the line of railway between Shencotta and Trivandrum is removed and we are given the necessary compensation. We are perfectly willing and anxious to conduct ordinary road transport between Trivandrum and every other place in the State. That would be cheaper and more economical. Later on, if necessary, the system of mono-rail operated by electricity can be started between the various units in the state. We do not wish to make any further railway extension and that is the deliberate and final policy of the State.

Land Revenue Commissioner.

2. ***MR. PULIYOOR T. P. VELAYUDHAN PILLAI** (*Thiruvalla*) : Will the Government be pleased to state :

(a) whether they have considered the desirability of re-establishing the office of the Land Revenue Commissioner in Travancore; and

(b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, the decision arrived at?

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI (*Secretary to Government*) :

(a) Yes.

(b) The decision of Government is that the office need not be re-established.

MR. M. K. MAHOMED (*Kunnathad cum Parur*) : May I know from the honourable member whether the Land Revenue Commissioner is to work in the Secretariat?

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI : There is no Land Revenue Commissioner at all.

MR. M. K. MAHOMED : In answer to question (a) it is stated there.

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI : To consider the question of the desirability of re-establishing the post is one thing, and having the Land Revenue Commissioner in the Secretariat is quite another. I do not know how it follows from the affirmative answer given to question (a).

PRESIDENT : What is the honourable member's idea?

MR. K. A. MAHOMED : What I wanted to know is whether the Government have decided to re-establish the Land Revenue Commissioner.

PRESIDENT : The changes that have been recently announced will take away much of the work given from the Proverthikars and Peishkars so that the question of re-establishing the Land Revenue Commissioner will be wholly unnecessary.

MR. K. A. MATHEW (Thiruvalla) : May I know from the honourable member the officers who will supervise the work of the Division Peishkars if the post of Land Revenue Commissioner is not going to be restored.

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI : The Division Peishkar himself supervises the work of his Department within the particular Division. The honourable member may note that the Peishkar is quite as much a Head of Department as any other Head of Department.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know whether one of the Secretaries will go and inspect the Division Peishkars' offices?

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI : No, Sir. The Peishkar, being a Head of Department himself, supervises and controls the work of all his subordinates. There is no necessity for an inspection of the Division Peishkars' offices by any other officer.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know whether, when the Land Revenue Commissioner's post was in vogue, the Division Peishkars' offices were not inspected by the Land Revenue Commissioner?

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI : Such an inspection was considered wholly unnecessary; and that was one of the reasons why the post of the Land Revenue Commissioner was abolished.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : Would it make for efficient management of the affairs of the Division Peishkars' offices?

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI : Certainly, Sir.

PRESIDENT : I think that for the information of the House, I may say that the Land Revenue Commissioner did not do any supervision of the Peishkars' offices at all. His inspection was mainly formal and to a large extent perfunctory. It was found that the Land Revenue Commissioner was only a derelict fifth wheel in the coach. So the post was abolished.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI (Mavelikara cum Kunnattur) : May I know whether the Government have decided to institute a Committee referred to in question (d)?

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI : The Dewan President has announced that non-official opinion in the matter will be ascertained; but the *modus operandi* has not yet been decided.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI : In that statement made by the Dewan, may I know whether any decision has been arrived at or any steps were taken to institute the Committee?

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI : Steps are already being taken to ascertain non-official opinion.

PRESIDENT : Order, order. In justice to the honourable house I must mention what has taken place. Four years ago this idea of abolishing Land Revenue and substituting an equitable system of taxation was mooted by me in the House, and from that time various opinions have been communicated to Government and steps have been taken to ascertain public opinion from time to time. It may generally be stated that the larger land-owners are generally against the levy of income tax and the smaller land-owners are essentially in favour of the new scheme. It is true that the larger land owners, to a large extent, escape from any taxation at all. One or two crucial instances came to my notice the other day and when the occasion comes probably Mr. Karunakaran and one or two others who themselves narrated their own experiences personally to me will explain the exact position to the House. People who have a large extent of land have really escaped taxation and I was very glad that one or two honourable members of this House and one or two members from outside came and told me how much that escape from taxation amounted to. The Government came to the conclusion some time ago, notwithstanding that they knew that there would be a certain amount of opposition by the bigger land-owners or some of the bigger land-owners who are not so far slighted as to see the ultimate advantage, that the system must be changed. The root idea of the system is that the lowest possible basic tax must be imposed and that nothing except the basic tax will be paid until a fairly high income level is reached. The persons deriving profitable income from land would thus be just as the people who are getting income from trade or commerce, and they will also be liable to pay. Government however, realise that the land-owner is subject to certain catastrophes and troubles which are not experienced by other sections of the population. As has already been indicated, the decision to levy a basic tax and to levy an income tax above an income level has been taken by Government and steps are also under way for the purpose of asking the various Peishkars to summon conferences as soon as the Budget session is over in order to work out the details and see what specific difficulties in each district may arise and how best the difficulties or anomalies could be dealt with.

MR. P. O. THOMAS (*Kunnathnad cum Parur*) : Will the Government be pleased to state the nature of the steps that are being taken to ascertain public opinion?

PRESIDENT : The Peishkars who are presumably acquainted with leading men in the various districts have been asked to summon conferences at the district head-quarters to ascertain public opinion and report that opinion to Government.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI : May I know the difficulty in instituting a Committee, formed of some of the members of the Legislature, to go into the question?

PRESIDENT : Rightly or wrongly the Government have arrived at this decision. It may be that it was very unfortunate on the part of the Government to have arrived at the decision without appointing a Committee. Government came to the conclusion that if a Committee were to be appointed, it would take five or ten years to make its report and that in the result nothing would be done.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know why the Government were driven to that misfortune of deciding so, without consulting the public opinion of the country?

PRESIDENT : Government have consulted public opinion and only then have they arrived at the decision.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know how that opinion was arrived at? Did the Government hold a conference?

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI : While we are really in favour of the principle, the system of administering it may be certainly left to a Committee to decide. But while we agree to the Peishkars taking public opinion, we would like to see a Committee of the Legislature also going into the question.

MR. P. M. VARGHESE (*Meenachil cum Thodupuzha*): How can public opinion be ascertained except through this House?

PRESIDENT : Public opinion can be ascertained otherwise.

MR. P. O. THOMAS : Is it not putting the cart before the horse if the Peishkars are directed to ascertain the views before the practical difficulties are realised?

PRESIDENT : Order, order. The cart is the decision. The horse will be attached to the cart. (*Laughter*).

MR. P. M. VARGHESE : If there are other means of ascertaining public opinion, what are they?

PRESIDENT : The members of this House and of the other House could be called in conference and a decision arrived at.

Land Revenue System.

3 ***MR. PULIYOOR T. P. VELAYUDHAN PILLAI :** Will the Government be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal before Government to change the existing land revenue system in the State;

(b) whether they have taken steps to ascertain the opinion of the legislature on the new proposal;

(c) whether they are aware that the Government of Mysore have stated in the Legislative Assembly on 27th June 1945 that a committee consisting of officials and non-officials would be constituted for the purpose of going into the question of the revision of land revenue system in Mysore; and

(d) whether they have considered the desirability of constituting such a committee in Travancore?

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI : The member is referred to the Dewan-President's statement at the joint sitting of the Legislature on 20-7-'45